DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 783 CE 065 359

AUTHOR Newman, Anabel P.; Lehman, Bernadette
TITLE Coalition Building for Adult Literacy: Historical and Organizational Perspectives.
INSTITUTION National Center on Adult Literacy, Philadelphia, PA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO NCAL-TR93-13
PUB DATE Nov 93
CONTRACT R117Q0003
NOTE 62p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Center on Adult Literacy, Dissemination/Publications, 3910 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111 (order no. TR93-13: $6; check or money order payable to "Kinko's Copy Center").
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Community Involvement; Educational Practices; *Educational Trends; Guidelines; Information Networks; Institutional Cooperation; *Literacy Education; Models; National Programs; *Organizational Development; *Partnerships in Education; Program Development; School Community Programs; Shared Resources and Services; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Coalitions

ABSTRACT

Selected successful literacy coalitions were examined to identify key issues and trends in coalition building. The six key issues identified (focus and functions, funding, governance, membership, key figures, and evaluation) were used as a framework to review the early efforts, current activities, and future visions of literacy coalitions operating at the following levels: (1) national (National Coalition for Literacy, Business Council for Effective Literacy, Project Literacy U.S., State Literacy Initiatives Network, State Literacy Exchange of the National Governor's Association, National Center on Adult Literacy, National Institute for Literacy); (2) regional and state (Delta Initiatives, Illinois Literacy Council, Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition, Maryland Literacy Works, Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign); and (3) local (Arizona LEARN Labs Consortium, Maricopa County Adult Probation Education and Literacy Program, Baltimore Reads, Inc., Harrisburg and other local coalitions in Pennsylvania, Literacy Network of Kalamazoo County). The results were synthesized into the following tips for building a coalition: select a chair, maintain continuity, avoid competition, build flexibility, use ad hoc groups, allow for discussion, allow for lobbying, and establish a decision-making structure. Appended are a list of the types of organizations from which the Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition plans to recruit its membership and a list of coalition addresses. (Contains 34 references.) (MN)

ED 365 783

NCAL

NATIONAL CENTER ON ADULT LITERACY

COALITION BUILDING FOR ADULT LITERACY:

HISTORICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Anabel P. Newman
Bernadette Lehman

Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

TECHNICAL REPORT TR93-13
NOVEMBER 1993

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This work was supported by funding from the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania, which is part of the Education Research and Development Center Program (Grant No. R117Q0003) as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, in cooperation with the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the National Center on Adult Literacy, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, or the U.S. Department of Education.

NATIONAL CENTER ON ADULT LITERACY, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, 3910 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104-3111

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 1993 BY
NATIONAL CENTER ON ADULT LITERACY
University of Pennsylvania
3910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
Phone (215) 898-2100 FAX (215) 898-9804

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Revised November 1993

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many coalition supporters at every level deserve credit for making this report a reality. Two people in the late 1970s especially, however, pushed for the uniting of interests that made the National Coalition for Literacy a reality.

Dr. Robert Wedgeworth, then Director of the American Library Association, and Jean Coleman, then Director of ALA's Outreach Program, deserve special credit for their vision and efforts to shepherd the coalition concept through its initial organizational steps. Their work has had an incredible multiplier effect. We are grateful.

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COALITION BUILDING FOR ADULT LITERACY:

PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Coalitions were immensely successful in achieving member-identified goals such as increased public awareness and action in adult literacy during the 1980s and early 1990s. This paper reviews the creation and work of the various national, state, and local coalitions that were largely responsible for those gains. The authors present a model for coalition building and discuss the following critical planning issues: (a) focus and function, (b) funding, (c) governance procedures, (d) membership, (e) the role of key figures, and (f) evaluation. In conclusion, the authors offer suggestions for successful coalition building that have evolved out of the experiences of national and regional coalitions.

INTRODUCTION

By definition, coalitions are fragile, temporary alliances of distinct parties, persons, or states created for the purpose of joint action. They can deliver only as much as their members are willing to give. Coalitions function without prescribed government, unless their members are willing to develop a constitution or bylaws and fill leadership positions. They function without finances, unless their members are willing to tax themselves or raise money, and without specific goals until their members are willing to articulate their reasons for coming together. A coalition must gather its own centripetal force and at the same time generate a course that will centrifugally pull along others.

Coalitions are drawn together by common interests, and they remain intact only as long as their members either have the will or the need for or see advantages in participation. These loosely linked organizations, recognizing common objectives and cooperating to achieve common goals, may either simply share information or integrate and coordinate activities to productive ends. They have the potential to solve big problems that their individual organizations may not be able to solve alone. When they are most effective, coalitions facilitate networking, bringing into close contact what would otherwise appear to be a jumble of individual agencies. The decade of the 1980s witnessed a burst of literacy coalition activity: first at the national level, with the birth of the National Coalition for Literacy in 1981; later with President Reagan's direction to governors to encourage the formation of state coalitions for literacy in 1983; and, finally, with the effort that had the greatest impact on coalition development, the launching of the Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) campaign in 1985. Since the first of these efforts began, a broad array of coalition-type activities has sprung up—some that withered as key members assumed new roles, others that flourished to provide a forum and network for their members.

A. The Concept of a Coalition

This report examines key issues in coalition building, drawing from the experiences of the National Coalition for Literacy and other successful coalitions. An examination of six characteristics of coalition building will help pinpoint benefits and barriers to certain routes to organizing large groups of diverse people. Even though there may be other models that can be useful in examining coalition building, the following model can add to the body of knowledge as the world of adult literacy claims its space in the world of education and research development. The model includes six components that must be addressed: (a) focus and functions, (b) funding, (c) governance, (d) membership, (e) key figures, and (f) evaluation.

1. Focus and Functions

Coalition members, by virtue of their differing organizational priorities, bring a plethora of agenda items to the table. However, during the formative period of a coalition, it is vital to carefully winnow peripheral objectives in order to define the broad goal(s) of the group. The functions of the coalition evolve out of this broad purpose. In the early days of the National Coalition for Literacy, members had to work hard to refine several specific goals into the one broad goal of national awareness. At this point, and with this goal, a communication committee became crucial. A fund-raising committee was also identified as necessary, but it evolved into a financial committee as the Coalition realized that fund raising was not its strength and that its efforts might better be directed to other purposes.

2. Funding

Funding generally proves to be an ongoing dilemma for coalitions, as it was for the National Coalition for Literacy. Start-up funds, however small, are almost a necessity for an emerging coalition unless a local, state, regional, or federal group or agency is willing to cover the early funding period. Funding for state coalitions arises in a variety of ways. Monies for the Illinois coalition, the Illinois Literacy Council, came from an abundant state aid package that became the envy of other struggling coalitions in the 1980s. By contrast, the Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition was funded through the contributions of its three major

administrative groups and contributions from cooperating corporations such as IBM.

Initial funding for the formation of the National Coalition for Literacy came from a small grant to the American Library Association from New York's H. W. Wilson Foundation, Inc. In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education provided a grant of $50,000 to encourage other potential funders to contribute, while a grant of $70,426 in 1984 facilitated the continuance of the awareness campaign. This kind of seed money was significant, but the $250,000 provided to the National Coalition by Harold McGraw, Jr., through the offices of the Business Council for Effective Literacy, provided the crucial money for the awareness campaign. McGraw observed that Coalition members should not be spending their time raising money, but rather, they should devote themselves to the activity that they are most capable of doing—solving the literacy problem. McGraw further noted that if potential contributors within a community, state, or region realize the commitment and seriousness of purpose of a potential coalition, they, too, may be convinced that such a sizable contribution will be well spent.

McGraw's wise philosophy is important to consider as membership within a coalition expands. Willing though they may be to assist with the literacy effort, lawyers may not be interested in tutoring, but they may be some of the best community members to develop constitutions and bylaws or to preside over community fund raisers. Likewise, while coalition members may not be big contributors to a coalition's treasury, their in-kind contributions can sometimes mean the difference between printing and not printing or mailing and not mailing important announcements, invitations, and brochures. The in-kind contributions of National Coalition members and organizations solicited by members have been enormous. Acknowledgment of these contributions can be as important as a large advertising effort and can serve the purpose of meeting the needs of the contributing group as well as the coalition.

Fund raising is an art that needs the support and direction of people familiar with its intricacies. City libraries usually have listings of foundations and business contributors that will provide ideas for those searching for coalition-building money. In addition to enlisting a cadre of people within the community who are willing to make the necessary contacts, an evolving coalition needs to establish a fund-raising committee that, if it did not do direct fund raising itself, will maintain contact with those within the community who can be called upon for such efforts. After its own

unsuccessful attempts, the National Coalition found that large-scale, active fund raising was best suspended in favor of targeted events such as spelling bees or quiz bowls, which fostered community coalescence and benefited all contributing members. Together with the American Broadcasting Company, the National Coalition sponsored the National Literacy Honors Event at the White House. Not only was this an incredible media event—the largest ever attempted in the White House—but it also provided windfall monies that the National Coalition shared with the Contact Literacy Center to keep the national hotline afloat. Similarly, $25,000 from a Radio City Music Hall event was plowed back into support for the hotline.

The whole question of financial management can make or break a coalition. The sooner it is answered, the more sound the growth of the coalition. Identifying a coalition member organization that is willing to handle budgets is a necessity, regardless of the size of the coalition. The American Library Association has served as the fiscal agent for the National Coalition. Another solution to the problem of financial management is for the coalition to employ the use of a foundation, such as the one that Indiana has developed, for the purpose of soliciting funds. However, this mechanism comes with ramifications that should be carefully considered before the organization of a foundation takes place. One way is to contact someone familiar with the pros and cons of foundation development. University foundations, for example, have officers who can offer information. Often coalitions are hindered because they do not have a central agency capable of collecting contributions as a nonprofit organization under IRS Code 501 [C][3]. This status can be obtained through application to appropriate state agencies and is immensely important if a group hopes to collect money as a nonprofit organization.

Another issue is membership dues. The National Coalition has opted not to charge membership fees because some groups with unstable or minimal funding might not join with such a requirement. Even so, one potential member remarked, "I can't imagine a group the size of the Coalition existing without dues." This condition has meant that the National Coalition also exists without paid staff. A successful method for covering National Coalition members' expenses for national meetings evolved from the necessities of a dwindling bank account. Although the original hope had been that fund raising might cover transportation and per diem costs for constituent members, it soon became apparent that this route was not feasible. As a result, participating

organizations currently pay transportation and per diem expenses for their members who attend Coalition meetings. The National Coalition pays expenses for the chair, and a small budget is allotted for administrative expenses.

Another consideration is product endorsement. Early on, the National Coalition for Literacy had to decide whether or not it would allow product names to be used in conjunction with Coalition advertising. For example, would a major funder be listed on National Coalition brochures? After hours of debate, it was decided that such a listing would be allowed if the interests of the Coalition as a whole, rather than those of an individual member, were served.

3. Governance

Coalitions are most likely to survive if their governing bodies or administrative contributors carry enough weight within the community to contribute in terms of finance and personnel. The group needs a facilitator. A chair might then be elected, or the facilitator might continue to draw the group together as agreed upon by the members. Responsibility for efficient and effective administration is then divided among the participants. One model is to have the leaders of the group, however they are defined, meet every other month, with subcommittees meeting in the alternate months. Decisions regarding a constitution and bylaws must rest with the members.

4. Membership

The cardinal points in selecting members are (a) to include all adult literacy concerned parties and (b) to keep membership beneficial to all without being restrictive. Membership in a coalition formed to benefit adult literacy should be defined by level of commitment to that cause. Breadth of representation and consideration of the needs of participating groups are important. Bringing all parties to the table early on in the process means that interests have a chance to surface and to become a part of the group agenda. Action is much more likely to result when all voices are heard. Allowing member groups to define their own membership contributions flexibly is equally important.

An example of effective membership selection can be seen in the Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition. In its early days of planning, the Coalition strove to build a broad base of participation by identifying constituencies that should always be represented in the group (see Appendix A). Within the past several years, it has added

the adult new reader, an inclusion that has provided an immediacy of perspective beneficial to other coalition members.

In the early days of the National Coalition for Literacy, the American Library Association invited the most directly involved literacy provider organizations to become charter members. Volunteer service providers, such as Laubach Literacy Action and Literacy Volunteers of America, were obvious choices within this category. The next groups invited were organizations with purposes that overlapped with adult literacy, such as the International Reading Association, whose interests encompass a broad range of literacy concerns from kindergarten through adulthood, and the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, whose purposes encompass a whole range of educational concerns that impinge upon adult learning.

Governmental groups were also included as charter members of the National Coalition: the National Commission of Libraries and Information Science, an independent governmental commission representing libraries at the federal level; the National Commission on Adult Education, another voice speaking for adult education at the national level; and the U.S. Department of Education, representing the whole spectrum of educational needs and interests. Representing state-level views was the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education.

Private business was represented by only one group, B. Dalton Booksellers, which had considerable commitment at that time to the cause of adult literacy.

The Contact Literacy Center, a human services organization, was added to service the national hotline for callers who wished to receive information about adult literacy, either as recipients of tutoring or as providers of a volunteer service.

This early group of literacy-engaged organizational representatives created a solid core of commitment as the National Coalition grew. Currently, although a commitment to adult literacy must still be demonstrated as a strong component of the applying organization, the membership has a much broader base, including the American Bar Association, the National Center for Family Literacy, Project Literacy U.S., and the Library of Congress, the Center for the Book.

Differentiating categories of membership in the National Coalition for Literacy—sustaining (voting) and affiliate (nonvoting)—solved the problem for government agencies

regarding questions of policy. Their useful input is included, while their need to remain aloof from policy commitment is protected.

Finally, financial strings attached to membership must be tied with a very loose knot. The National Coalition decided that it would forego financial commitments, lest membership be limited or reduced when organizations could not pay. Similarly, the Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition does not collect dues. For both coalitions, in-kind contributions have been considerable, with groups contributing as they are able. This seems to be a pragmatic solution to the dilemma of whether to pay or not to pay.

5. Key Figures

Key figures are significant to a coalition for their ability to serve as rallying points, especially at crucial or ongoing development times. Barbara Bush, a literacy advocate long before her husband became President, provided such a figure for the literacy movement in the 1980s. She spoke at national and local events, held a luncheon at the White House for prominent literacy figures to announce the Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation, tapped a key literacy worker from the U.S. Department of Education to assist in the coordination of the First Lady's literacy activities, and gave her name and support to literacy fund raisers and other events across the country.

At an open meeting of the National Coalition for Literacy in 1985, Karl O. Haigler offered projections to consolidate and expand literacy within and without the U.S. Department of Education. Haigler, Director of the Adult Literacy Initiative and thus a key literacy figure in the country, suggested stepping up efforts to promote coalition building—reinforcing relationships between adult education programs and major adult literacy groups, consulting with the Business Council for Effective Literacy to learn how business can take part in using their vast human potential, and maintaining communications through a newsletter and an electronic mail line (Newman, 1986). Rays of hope dispersed by key figures at key times were sustaining to beleaguered Coalition members who were working hard within their own organizations and at the same time supporting the efforts of the National Coalition.

Another aspect of the importance of key figures was suggested by a member of the Indiana Coalition after hearing a report on the activities of the National Coalition: "Tell them how important it is that we have a group to look to for leadership and ideas." A similar emphasis on the importance of leading figures was voiced

by one of the promoters of Wisconsin's literacy movement: "We've looked to the national effort and patterned many of our moves after theirs." Thus, even though progress at the national level seemed agonizingly slow, it did sometimes have a positive effect.

6. EVALUATION

Often when people are working hard to form and maintain a coalition, they are not inclined to evaluate how well they have done (i.e., what the impact of their efforts has been). In their initial enthusiasm, they have not included evaluation plans, money for evaluation, or provisions for an evaluation team. Records are often sketchy, if they are maintained at all.

Fortunately for the National Coalition for Literacy, an early intent was to evaluate the efforts of the advertising awareness campaign. As the campaign got underway in the mid-1980s, several Coalition members, under the leadership of then chairperson Violet Malone, urged that evaluation of the campaign be implemented. A small cadre from Indiana University and literacy volunteers undertook the evaluation study that turned out to be the first such evaluation of any Advertising Council campaign. The results provide a framework for other groups that wish to document their literacy efforts (Newman, 1986).

The question appeared simple enough: How well did the Coalition achieve its broad goal of increasing awareness and resources? Documenting the answer to this question was quite another matter. It involved an extensive library search, a survey of Coalition executive members and U.S. Department of Education personnel, personal and telephone interviews, and extensive correspondence. Gradually, the answers provided a picture of human, site, funding, and other resources. The evaluation was divided into three phases:

- early assessment of the impact of the Campaign Against Illiteracy on the resources available to a random sample of literacy programs listed by the Contact Literacy Center (This phase was also to include the results of a benchmark study by the Advertising Council to examine awareness of adult illiteracy on the part of a targeted audience at specific points in time.) (Autumn 1984 and July 1985);

- formative data on the two major goals of the campaign, impact on awareness of the problem and on resources; and
- summative evaluation in light of the Coalition's broad goals to determine if the 3-year literacy awareness campaign achieved these goals.

The Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition also initiated an evaluation midway through its 10-year life span. Calling on the offices of an outside evaluator, the administrators requested that a study be conducted to see how well the goals of the Coalition's 10-year plan were being met. The results were most encouraging. Not only was the group on target, it was ahead of schedule (Bonnet & Elston, 1988).

The details of these two evaluations are available elsewhere, but they provide general guidance for coalitions that may be in the planning stage. These coalitions will want to be sure that they plan adequately for evaluation when the time comes. General points to consider in designing an evaluation include

- identify group goals in writing,
- plan assessment measures in conjunction with goal setting in order to decide which data must be preserved,
- establish realistic data collection procedures,
- be diligent and persistent in collecting data as the project proceeds,
- consider an outside evaluator if financially feasible (should be someone who can work through the formative evaluation period), and
- set up a summative evaluation against originally established goals if a formative evaluator is not feasible. (An outside evaluator is preferable. If not possible, establish an internal team comprised of as broad a representation of interests as possible, making certain to include at least one member with evaluation experience.)

B. National Coalitions

This section describes early efforts, current activities, and future visions of a number of national literacy coalitions.

1. The National Coalition for Literacy

As the premier literacy coalition in the United States, the National Coalition for Literacy, founded in 1981, has played a unique role in establishing the concept of a coalition as a powerful organizing principle for literacy-related efforts in the United States and perhaps in other countries as well. It grew out of the recognition in the late 1970s that the extent of adult illiteracy in the United States, or at least the condition of the marginally literate, was simply not known by the general populace. Its charter members included:

- American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE),
- American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA),
- American Library Association (ALA),
- B. Dalton Bookseller,
- Contact Literacy Center,
- International Reading Association (IRA),
- Laubach Literacy Action (LLA),
- Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA),
- National Advisory Council on Adult Education (NACAE),
- National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), and
- National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE).

Currently, the National Coalition includes almost 30 sustaining (voting) and affiliate (nonvoting) member organizations. More than any other single group, the National Coalition has focused and galvanized literacy efforts in the United States (Newman & Beverstock, 1990).

However, the early days of the National Coalition were fraught with difficulties including (a) strife among agency representatives to protect their own turf, (b) reluctance to join in Coalition fund raising as a whole, (c) haggling over who should have the most say, and (d) change and unsteadiness of leadership. There was skepticism and little compensation for each other's weaknesses. There was often backbiting, infighting, and little sense of direction other than the overarching goal of building greater awareness of the needs of the adult nonreader.

Senge (1991) of the MIT Sloan School of Management has characterized the essence of a learning organization:

> *Have you ever been involved with a team of people who functioned together superbly? It may have been in business, school, or sports, but it probably happened only once or twice in your lifetime. People trusted each other, complemented each other's strengths, compensated for each other's weaknesses, aimed for goals higher than anyone might have dared individually—and as a result produced an extraordinary outcome.*
>
> *Such teams display special characteristics: Each member is committed to continual improvement, each suspends judgment as to what's possible and so removes mental limitations, each shares a vision of greatness, and the team's collective IQ is far greater than any individual's. Team members also recognize and understand the system in which they operate and how they can influence it. (p. 1)*

While Senge's vision of the perfect learning organization suggests some characteristics of the current National Coalition for Literacy, it certainly did not characterize the Coalition at its inception. The Coalition remained together only because many of those who sat through the early meetings refused to give up. They had caught sight of the concept of unity, and although personal and organizational differences tugged mightily, they knew that if they were to have a meaningful voice for adult literacy in the world of government, business, education, or society, they had to stay on course.

As the National Coalition for Literacy grew in purpose, membership, and recognition, it became willing to undertake collective actions that few of its member groups would have had the strength or power to attempt alone. Recognizing that

advertising was probably the most efficient and effective means of reaching the broadest audience, the American Library Association (ALA) approached the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) with a proposal: Would they be willing to mount a national awareness campaign on behalf of adult literacy in the United States? Although unwilling to consider such a possibility for the ALA alone, the AAAA did agree, through one of its participating agencies, to mount an advertising awareness campaign on behalf of 11 of the major literacy providers in the United States.

The members affirmed and fortified each other, and, despite the skepticism and wariness that competitors exercise, their unity began to pay off. The 1985–1986 national advertising awareness campaign, the first of the Advertising Council's big campaigns (e.g., Smoky the Bear, Crime Prevention, War on Drugs) to be evaluated on its effectiveness, produced remarkable results (Newman, 1986). The evaluation of the Advertising Council's campaign to promote greater awareness of adult literacy issues gave rise to the following findings:

- Awareness of the problems confronting functionally illiterate adults and out-of-school youth in the United States increased significantly. The general public showed more familiarity with the issue, and concern was maintained at consistently strong levels. For example:
  - — The number of calls to the Contact Literacy Center hotline in 1985 increased from a low of 962 in January to a high of 3,587 in September. By the end of June 1992, a total of 744,830 clients had been served by the hotline since its inception.
  - — Over $24 million was contributed in media time and space in the first year of the campaign.
  - — Enrollment in literacy programs rose by 9%, and the number of volunteer teachers increased by 29% during the first year. Total funding for literacy programs was estimated to be up about 9% over the preceding year.
  - — Requests to volunteer tutoring groups rose by over 100% in 1985.

- The human, site, and funding resources available to combat the problems of functionally illiterate adults also increased measurably.
  - — Volunteers in Coalition member groups increased by over 100% and in the U.S. Department of Education Network by 243%. Volunteers at adult basic education sites increased.
  - — Paid staff in volunteer organizations increased.
  - — Foundation, business, and industry contributions increased markedly.
  - — Donations of other types, including media time, materials, volunteer contributions other than tutoring, and sustained in-kind contributions by Coalition constituents, also increased.

Such outcomes suggested the magnitude of change in public awareness that resulted in part from the Advertising Council's campaign and attest to the efficiency of coalition cooperation.

The Contact Literacy Center was given an initial financial boost from the National Coalition, along with media contributions of $24 million to support the toll-free literacy hotline. As the only national literacy hotline, it refers calls from those wanting to tutor or be tutored from a database of more than 10,000 people and programs nationwide. After almost a decade, calls now average from 10,000 to 15,000 per month, depending upon the time of year and special campaigns that highlight the hotline. The Contact Literacy Center also publishes a newsletter, *The Written Word*, which features new approaches to literacy, special projects, programs at all levels, new publications, materials, conferences, and funding sources.

On the basis of its own experiences, the National Coalition for Literacy has published *How to Form a State or Local Literacy Coalition*, which is available through the American Library Association. The guide recommends that state and local coalitions (a) assess literacy and situational needs, (b) establish goals and objectives based on needs, (c) provide services and resources where they are missing, (d) coordinate activities, (e) exchange information, and (f) stimulate new programs.

The National Coalition experience suggests one of the most significant characteristics of a successful coalition: It must represent a convergence of values and interests, a synergistic union

in action within which the members are willing to forego some of their individual interests in order to achieve important items on a common agenda. Its vision for its own future must include

- serving as an authoritative voice on emerging literacy issues;
- sustaining and expanding public awareness and understanding of literacy and its relation to other social issues;
- fostering collaboration at national, state, and local levels among private and public institutions;
- providing a forum for communication and coordination among its member organizations;
- encouraging applied research and its effective dissemination;
- serving as an information and communication source for the public and for external organizations; and
- serving as the leadership voice of the literacy movement.

2. Business Council for Effective Literacy

The mission of the Business Council for Effective Literacy (BCEL), founded in 1983, was "to foster greater public awareness of adult functional illiteracy and to increase business involvement in the literacy field" (Irwin, 1991a, p. 9). It supported business participation and funding for workplace literacy projects. Harold McGraw, educational publisher and retired CEO of McGraw-Hill, started BCEL with the belief that businesses have to give support to schools and that the future of American businesses depends on the competence of the workforce (Prete, 1989). As a preeminent businessperson, he was in a position to successfully ask for business participation and funding for coalitions and was one of the most encouraging voices heard by the National Coalition for Literacy in its early days.

BCEL reported that over 70% of job-related reading material is written at the 9th- to 12th-grade reading level and will probably go higher as technology advances. An individual who lacks the basic skills of reading and writing cannot keep up with the new technology. It is to a company's benefit to deal with illiteracy at the workplace, as job efficiency is increased tremendously. Workplace literacy also contributes to the personal safety of employees (Clarkson, 1992). BCEL urged businesses to

- make grants to local adult literacy organizations;
- provide in-kind assistance to local programs in the form of space for classes, computers or other equipment, publicity, printing of instructional materials, and fund raising help;
- make grants for the development of new literacy approaches and services;
- provide financial and in-kind support to national literacy organizations;
- join and provide financial support to local and state planning/coordinating councils and agencies;
- support research, data collection, and information dissemination;
- establish employee basic skills programs;
- encourage employees and families of employees to volunteer as literacy tutors; and
- press for public support of literacy programs.

In addition, BCEL provided technical assistance to businesses by convening seminars for executives from diverse segments of the business community to discuss literacy issues and by meeting with individual companies to discuss their particular literacy needs. It supplied state literacy coalitions with the names of corporations, corporate foundations, and other business organizations in their states that might be approached for assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 1988). It also spoke with literacy programs about the opportunities for corporate backing in the field and promoted family literacy, working from the assumption that literacy begins at home.

BCEL published and distributed free of charge a quarterly newsletter for the CEOs of the nation's 4,000 largest companies and others interested in the literacy movement.* The newsletter included reviews of publications, technological developments, grant guidelines, policy analyses, and networking growth. BCEL also produced monographs aimed at shaping public policy and provided a national context for business involvement through bulletins about special topics and other resource materials such as its publication entitled *Functional Illiteracy Hurts Business*.

* BCEL ceased to exist in 1993.

3. PROJECT LITERACY U.S.

Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) began in 1985 as a public service campaign by Capital Cities/American Broadcasting Company and the Public Broadcasting Service to raise awareness about the literacy issue and to form community outreach task forces to deal with illiteracy (Lazar, Trovato, Bean, & McWilliams, 1989). The campaign of television and radio programming included public service announcements, the *Learner of the Month* (a series to help learners prepare for the GED test), entertainment extravaganzas highlighting literacy, documentaries, movies, and *After School Specials*.

The major themes of the PLUS movement continue to be civic literacy, workplace literacy, and literacy of youth. Its goals are to promote (a) the formation of local task forces, (b) the participation of both learners and volunteers in literacy programs, (c) national awareness of the need for workplace literacy, and (d) the assessment of local workplace literacy. The national office of PLUS offers a manual of general information and resources available to task forces. In addition, PLUS maintains four regional offices to help individual localities meet their literacy needs.

PLUS is an advocate of partnerships between task forces and businesses that are designed to get local businesses involved in the literacy effort and to identify business needs and sensitivities. An effective partnership involves establishing a business advisory committee for guidance, studying the basic skills level of a community and how that level impacts the health of businesses, and setting goals for the community. Business advisory committees represent the local network of businesses, including such members as the CEO council or chamber of commerce, smaller employers, labor, the local economic planning system, and the Private Industry Council. The varying perspectives of these kinds of organizations need to be incorporated in the hows and whys of workplace literacy activities, whether they provide on-the-job training for current workers or retraining programs for displaced workers. At the same time, business advisory committees must solicit input from the educational community.

PLUS urges the use of business breakfasts, which it has sponsored simultaneously at the national, state, and local levels. It provides a kit on how to conduct a successful breakfast, how to seek the involvement of local businesses, and how to create invitations, agendas, logo sheets, and so forth. Its publications include *Literacy on the Job: The Challenge for Business* and *What Works in Workplace Literacy*.

An evaluation of the PLUS program reported 425 task forces throughout the country (Lazar et al 1989). Many had experienced growth by combining with other literacy organizations, continuing to pursue PLUS literacy initiatives, and finding a stable source of funding. Nearly 60% of the task forces combined with other programming efforts. Furthermore, almost 60% had applied for or had access to nonprofit funding. Direct services to businesses were provided by 60% of the task forces, and 64% of them provided direct services to schools. The evaluation report stated:

> *When looking at the national delivery network for provision of literacy services it became evident that no one agency was responsible for overseeing all programming. Multiple overseers were the norm. The four most frequently mentioned overseers were State Departments of Education, local literacy cooperatives, libraries and colleges. (p. 5)*

PLUS enlarged its view to include the whole learning spectrum. Its theme, Project Learning U.S., suggests the breadth of this view and augurs well for an even greater audience.

4. State Literacy Initiatives Network

In 1983, President Reagan announced the Adult Literacy Initiative and challenged the country's governors to adopt the cause of adult literacy in each of their states. In 1986, B. Dalton Bookseller and the U.S. Department of Education convened literacy programmers from 15 states in the first national forum on state literacy objectives. The forum was named the State Literacy Initiatives Network.

The Network sought to share the broad-based perspective and experience of leaders responsible for creating recommendations throughout the states. It recognized that state coalitions should be seen as a legitimate way to deal with broad issues of concern and that they should have priority with the governors and state legislatures. Some needs of the state programs were to (a) develop clear goals, (b) create formalized relationships within the state structure, (c) focus on increasing access to literacy services, (d) foster public and private support, and (e) include a mechanism for communication and planning among all participants.

The State Literacy Initiatives Network was a precursor to the State Literacy Exchange of the National Governors' Association.

5. State Literacy Exchange of the National Governors' Association

The National Governors' Association (NGA) established the State Literacy Exchange in 1989 to provide information and assistance in the states' efforts to improve adult literacy services. The Exchange focused particularly on helping states to develop and implement infrastructures with the goal of creating integrated adult learning systems at the state level. The NGA stated:

> *State leadership is necessary, but not sufficient, for the establishment of an integrated adult learning system. With it, the foundation for a state infrastructure for literacy can begin to be constructed; without it, the opportunity for instituting a well-coordinated and efficient operated adult learning system is greatly diminished. (Silvanik, 1991, p. 5)*

To achieve the goal that every adult American be literate by the year 2000, the NGA made the following recommendations that states needed to

- demonstrate strong leadership and bring together key literacy leaders to secure the necessary commitment to build a state infrastructure for adult literacy and basic skills,
- determine the dimensions of their literacy problem by conducting an accurate and reliable assessment of the literacy and basic skills abilities of the adult population,
- set priorities and performance expectations for all publicly financed literacy services and encourage the private and nonprofit sectors to commit to these priorities and performance expectations,
- create accountability systems for all providers that establish clear performance standards to ensure quality programs,
- establish comprehensive credentialing systems grounded in a competency-based approach to skill certification that begins in school and continues through lifelong learning systems,
- promote professional development to upgrade the quality of instructors in the adult learning system,

- expand opportunities for experiential learning and increase the range of settings in which learning occurs, and
- promote self-directed learning and consumer choice. (Silvanik, 1991, p. 41)

The NGA stated that strong and committed state leadership was necessary to progress from the coalition/network phase through development of a literacy infrastructure to eventual implementation of an integrated system (Silvanik, 1991, p. 6). State leadership should serve as a catalyst to (a) integrate planning and formalize coordination and collaboration among all state-level and statewide providers and funders of adult literacy and basic skills services; (b) facilitate the involvement of the governor, the governor's staff, state legislators, and other state officials in formulating and implementing literacy policies and programs; and (c) monitor and evaluate programs to ensure that the literacy needs of adult learners are effectively met.

Leadership takes many forms. The following four state leadership strategies, which are not mutually exclusive, can significantly improve a state's chances of successfully developing and sustaining a state system:

- provide strong gubernatorial leadership and direct involvement in policy formulation and planning;
- encourage strong state-level leadership from outside the governor's office with indirect but strong support from the governor's office;
- implement strong leadership from the state legislature, including participation in policy formulation and planning and commitment of state resources; and
- solicit strong leadership from the private sector, in partnership with the public sector, with substantial involvement in policy and program development and resource development.

In 1990, the NGA conducted a national survey of state literacy efforts, including state literacy leadership and the strategies required to achieve integrated learning systems in each state (Silvanik, 1991). The survey found that some type of governor's literacy office existed in six states: Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The scope of their functions varied, with some more focused on workplace literacy or family literacy than others. Coordinating bodies for adult literacy

created by or administered through the governor's office existed in Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, and North Carolina. In addition, Arkansas, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, and West Virginia reported literacy activities that originated from the governor's office. Seventeen states reported that their governors used federal discretionary funds to provide or promote literacy services for adults.

Thirty states enacted literacy-specific legislation between 1986 and 1990, and 40 states formed coordinating bodies such as state coalitions to initiate state-level leadership. These bodies vary significantly in functions, activities, financial support, and membership, although they usually include representatives of state agencies directly responsible for funding or providing adult literacy and basic skills programs, such as state departments of education, administrative agencies for the Job Training Partnership Act and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program, and state libraries. Other members might include representatives from the governor's office, the state legislature, state-level volunteer organizations, employer associations, labor organizations, the media, local community-based providers, and adult learners. A major function of the state-level bodies is to raise public awareness of the need for literacy training in the state. This can be accomplished through media campaigns, state conferences, newsletters, and hotlines.

The State Literacy Exchange sponsors regional meetings to examine state strategies for integrating policy and management systems across education, employment and training, economic development, volunteer, welfare, and other state agencies.

6. National Center on Adult Literacy

The National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) was established in 1990 with funding from the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services. NCAL heads a national initiative to improve the literacy levels of Americans through three basic means: enhance the knowledge base on adult literacy, improve research and development in the field, and ensure a reciprocal relationship between research and practice. NCAL's research and development is built around four central themes: (a) literacy within life situations, (b) multiple paths to literacy, (c) understanding adult learning processes, and (d) information-based decision making.

The bases of NCAL's work are the theories that adults learn differently than children and require varying forms of instruction and that effective literacy programs must be sensitive and responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of adult learners. Thus, programs must be delivered where they are sought, whether in correctional institutions, workplaces, libraries, or other settings. NCAL research is attempting to show how adults can learn more effectively and how skills and knowledge can be transferred over time and in different settings.

NCAL seeks to expand the framework of research by providing a (a) broad knowledge base on adult literacy; (b) national focus to guide local, state, and federal policymakers; (c) source of information for research, development, and technical assistance; (d) strong two-way link between practitioners and researchers; and (e) forum for national dialogue on the multifaceted questions posed by adult literacy.

Dissemination of knowledge is an important aspect of NCAL's work. It circulates information through client-centered, self-sustaining networks within educational practice, research, policy, development, business, industry, labor, and the public. Information is disseminated through

- roundtables, conferences, and workshops;
- a newsletter targeted for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers;
- technical reports;
- summaries and commentaries on research and policy issues;
- responses to requests from the media and policymakers;
- a literacy technology lab and staff who explore the range of technological developments and their application to adult literacy instruction;
- electronic versions of most research findings via on-line systems or diskettes; and
- an electronic mailbox for questions and requests.

7. The National Institute for Literacy

With the passage of the National Literacy Act of 1991, the National Institute for Literacy became a reality. The Institute's purpose is to strengthen the effort to improve literacy by advancing research, development, and information dissemination

at a national level (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). Under the Act, the National Institute for Literacy is authorized to

- assist federal agencies in setting specific objectives of the Act and in measuring the progress of agencies in meeting such goals;
- conduct basic and applied research and demonstrations on literacy in adult basic education, workplace literacy, and family literacy;
- assist federal, state, and local agencies and business and labor organizations in the development, implementation, and evaluation of literacy policy by providing technical and policy assistance for the improvement of policy and programs and establishing a national database;
- provide program assistance, training, and technical assistance for literacy programs throughout the United States in order to improve the effectiveness and increase the numbers of such programs;
- collect and disseminate information to federal, state, and local entities with respect to literacy methods that show promise;
- review and make recommendations regarding ways to achieve uniformity among reporting requirements, develop performance measures, and develop standards for effectiveness of literacy-related federal programs;
- award fellowships to outstanding individuals pursuing careers in adult education and literacy; and
- provide a toll-free, long-distance telephone line for literacy providers and volunteers (OVAE/DAEL, 1992).

Additionally, the Institute will coordinate with state literacy resource centers on a reciprocal basis to share information.

The Institute is governed by an interagency group consisting of the Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services. The day-to-day operation of the Institute is overseen by the Institute Governing Board. The President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the 10-member Board, which makes recommendations about the goals of the Institute and the programs necessary to implement those goals. Additionally, the

Board advises the Institute about the appointment of an Institute director and staff (Irwin, 1991b).

C. Regional and State Coalitions

In response to the Adult Literacy Initiative of 1983, a number of states launched literacy efforts. The Initiative, the precursor to the National Institute for Literacy, suggested that governors begin state coalitions, and out of this early but minimally funded encouragement grew several regional and state coalitions. Some have blossomed, while others have disappeared. General functions of regional and state coalitions for literacy include (a) assessing literacy needs and situations, (b) establishing goals and objectives based on needs, (c) providing services and resources to fill the gaps, (d) coordinating activities, (e) serving as a mechanism for exchange of information, and (f) stimulating new programs. In 1991, the National Literacy Act authorized the Secretary of Education to award grants to states to establish networks of adult literacy resources centers to enhance state and local services and to serve as a link between services providers and the National Institute for Literacy (Irwin, 1991b).

This section describes successful regional and state literacy networks, each of which meets the recommendations of the Literacy Exchange of the National Governors' Association in a unique way. In Illinois, the Secretary of State heads the Literacy Council. Indiana's adult literacy effort is governed by a coalition drawn from three agencies, and Maryland's is directed by an aggregate of agencies. Michigan's coalition is a private organization. Minnesota's governor is actively involved in its state coalition, while Pennsylvania's coalition was initiated by the state university and received the blessings of the governor. What these successful coalitions have in common is the dedication of creative and visionary leaders.

1. The Delta Initiatives

The Lower Mississippi Delta Commission was established in 1988 by Public Law 100-460 to represent the 8.3 million people in the 219 counties that border the Mississippi River in Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri. The Commission was charged with studying and making recommendations regarding the economic needs of this region, the poorest region of the United States, over a 10-year period. Included in the Commission's mandate was the need to address the issue of adult literacy and job training.

In its report, the Commission called for action in health, education, housing, community development, agriculture, natural resources, public infrastructure, entrepreneurial development, technology development, business development, tourism, and environmental issues (Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, 1990). The Commission was strong in its support of coalition building. It advised the states of the Lower Mississippi Delta to develop and implement a coordinated literacy enhancement system with the cooperation of public, private, and volunteer programs. Although the region has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the nation, prior to 1990 there was no agency to coordinate or evaluate adult literacy programs.

2. Illinois Literacy Council

The Office of the Secretary of State is in charge of the Illinois Literacy Council, founded in 1984, whose Board includes approximately 50 members representing education, business, libraries, and government. In addition, the Ad Hoc Interagency Coordinating Committee—representing Commerce and Community Affairs, the Department of Employment Securities, the State Board of Education, the Department of Corrections, Prairie State 2000 Authority, the Department of Public Aid, and the Illinois Community College Board—works with the secretary of state.

Since 1985, the Secretary of State's Literacy Grant Program has provided nearly $19 million in awards to volunteer literacy programs. The state's requirement that programs outline their cooperative efforts in grant proposals has stimulated coalition building by public providers, community-based organizations, private foundations, and the corporate community.

After interviewing more than 100 individuals concerned with literacy, the Illinois Literacy Council Long-Range Planning Team (1990) made a series of recommendations regarding the literacy effort in Illinois.

- Organizations funding literacy in Illinois should accept as the definition of literacy need reading, writing, and math levels below ninth grade and, therefore, set this as a priority for literacy program funding. The definition of workplace literacy need should be below the 10th-grade level.
- Local programs should be encouraged to develop individual literacy plans in order to meet the learning needs of each student.

- State agencies interested in an assessment of Illinois' literacy needs should jointly contract for such services with the Educational Testing Service to conduct a state literacy assessment.
- Under the auspices of the Illinois Literacy Council, a committee should be established to set standards for quality literacy programs and to establish accountability evaluators. This committee should be composed of, but not limited to, representatives from the Secretary of State's Literacy Office, the Illinois State Board of Education, volunteer organizations, literacy programs, state and local universities, and the business and labor communities.
- The Secretary of State's Literacy Office and the Illinois State Board of Education should determine a standard level of training and provide opportunities for such training to meet local program needs. To minimize costs, every attempt should be made to utilize existing technical assistance entities to provide such training. A reprioritization of the functions of these entities could provide effective training at a reasonable cost.
- The Secretary of State's Literacy Office and the Illinois State Board of Education should jointly fund a project to determine best practices or model programs. A reprioritization of existing technical assistance structures would serve this function, and a modest increase in existing budgets should provide adequate funding for this service.
- The governor should structure an Illinois Literacy Council to coordinate implementation of the recommendations of this long-range plan. The Council should be a public-private entity.
- The funding priority for literacy dollars should be directed toward programs serving adults functioning below the ninth-grade level in order to foster personal growth, individual economic independence, and a strong state economy. Moreover, funding priorities should remain focused, with programs serving those students who are least educated and most in need.

- The minimum state appropriation should provide enough money for cost-of-living increases and for growth based on achievement of program objectives.
- New monies, defined as any dollars not expended for cost-of-living and program growth, should be targeted for workplace, family, and special needs programming.
- The governor should direct the development of an integrated policy on funding and quality program delivery of literacy services in Illinois.

In response to the long-range planning team's recommendations, five subcommittees have been formed to address the issues of family literacy, assessment and evaluation, private sector involvement, workplace literacy, and public information.

The Family Literacy Subcommittee is working to define and implement family literacy efforts in Illinois. It selects activities and produces materials to promote family literacy, identifies organizations interested in family literacy, coordinates events between agencies, evaluates current family literacy efforts, and advocates legislation for family literacy.

The Assessment and Evaluation Subcommittee is working to ensure that current programs have the needed assessment and evaluation tools for the best service possible. It identifies the proper assessment and evaluation methods for programs, sets priorities for populations most in need of literacy services, provides staff development, and recognizes exemplary programs.

The Increasing Private Sector Involvement Subcommittee is working to identify specific ways in which the private sector can increase the effectiveness of the Illinois Literacy Network. It identifies the current level of private sector involvement in Illinois, researches ways in which the private sector could meaningfully contribute to the literacy effort, develops potential activities for the private sector, and creates a channel for private sector contributions.

The Promoting Literacy in the Workplace Subcommittee is working to promote, advocate, and recognize workplace literacy programs in the state. It seeks to obtain an endorsement for lifelong learning from businesses, labor unions, and trade associations; establishes and recognizes workplace literacy

partnerships; presents achievement awards; and advocates legislation to fund workplace literacy programs.

The Creating Public Awareness Subcommittee researches and implements ways to maintain awareness of the need for literacy programs. The Subcommittee identifies current literacy effort awareness and discovers the best practices for achieving greater literacy awareness. It determines how various organizations could contribute to public understanding and integrates the state's awareness efforts with national efforts.

3. Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition

The Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition was established in 1983 as a planning and coordination task force administered by the Indiana State Department of Adult and Continuing Education, the Indiana State Library, and the Governor's Voluntary Action Program. The stated mission of the Coalition is to provide state leadership and to encourage and support local efforts to eliminate functional illiteracy in Indiana adults. Its goals are to

- identify and build a network of people interested in working to eradicate adult illiteracy in Indiana,
- identify model literacy programs and projects,
- plan and conduct a governor's conference on "Partnerships for Adult Literacy" to be held during International Literacy Week,
- give recognition to Indiana citizens who have helped to reduce illiteracy,
- establish a long-range mechanism for the management of volunteers in adult literacy on a statewide basis, and
- make recommendations to state policymaking bodies on the issues of adult literacy and adult education.

Its strategies include

- providing a formal connection among the programs serving those adults who need development in reading and writing skills;
- publicizing and promoting adult literacy programs throughout the state to encourage participation by students and volunteers and to heighten public awareness of the state literacy program;

- encouraging the development of local adult literacy coalitions to coordinate, expand, and improve local literacy services;
- providing a clearinghouse for information about adult literacy services in the state and for referral of students and volunteers to appropriate programs;
- conducting and encouraging research to identify the extent of the illiteracy problem throughout the state and to evaluate the effectiveness of the adult literacy program;
- developing a comprehensive long-range plan for improved adult literacy services in the state and monitoring the progress toward accomplishment of the plan;
- promoting the communication and exchange of ideas among service providers; and
- promoting and facilitating contributions of time, space, funds, and other support by business and industry for employees lacking the necessary reading and writing skills and encouraging employees to become volunteers in adult literacy programs.

The Coalition has published *A Guide for Researchers,* which identifies needed research in adult literacy, including methods of literacy instruction, the effectiveness of literacy programs, employment and literacy programs, the demographics of illiteracy, and the learning environment. The guide also provides lists of adult literacy service providers who are willing to cooperate with researchers and researchers who are willing to provide technical assistance to providers (Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition, 1989).

Assisting the Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition are the Indiana Literacy Resource Center and the Indiana Literacy Coordinating Committee, Inc. The Resource Center, located in downtown Indianapolis, has over 800,000 items for loan, including instructional materials from beginner levels through high school, videos, audio cassettes, software programs, professional development items, reports about projects and research, and other materials. It also provides staff development activities, in-service training, and technical assistance for adult education teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals. The Resource Center coordinates with other adult education programs, coalitions, and organizations, and provides a 24-hour hotline that refers students

and tutors to local literacy programs. The Center publishes *The Resource*, a newsletter about people and trends in Indiana adult education. The nonprofit Indiana Literacy Coordinating Committee provides consultation and training to emerging and existing volunteer literacy programs. Its newsletter seeks to increase communication among all volunteer literacy programs and tutors in the state.

4. Maryland Literacy Works

In 1987, the Maryland Interagency Committee for Adult Literacy produced *Literacy Works: An Action Plan for Maryland,* which set forth the goal of eliminating illiteracy in Maryland by the year 2000. The Education Task Force of the Governor's Employment and Training Council supplied the impetus for the plan's development. Agency heads from the Maryland State Department of Human Resources, the Maryland State Department of Education, and the Maryland State Board for Community Colleges directed the Interagency Committee to formulate the plan.

In 1987, no single entity at the state level had the authority and the responsibility for eliminating adult illiteracy in Maryland. Furthermore, cooperative partnerships varied considerably among local jurisdictions. The linkages that did exist were weak among literacy programs in corrections, job training, and other adult literacy programs. Program evaluations focused on numbers served rather than effectiveness. In developing the plan, the Interagency Committee worked with literacy advocates and providers and conducted hearings, symposia, surveys, and policy analyses.

Under the Action Plan, the Education Task Force of the Governor's Employment and Training Council had the responsibility of coordinating state policy and interagency practices related to adult literacy. In addition, the Maryland State Department of Education began operation of a statewide literacy center, and a locally designed literacy network was added to increase collaboration and coordination among literacy providers. Implementation of the plan was divided into three phases. Phase I (1988-1990) was designed to develop specific performance standards. Phases II (1991-1995) and III (1996-2000) were designed to assess the progress of Phase I. The status of progress toward each goal has been assessed annually.

By 1990, literacy was becoming a priority in Maryland. The Education Task Force was at the helm of the literacy effort and provided support to the Literacy Works Management Team in

coordinating the plan. It approved fiscal year 1990 state goals for the literacy provider network, established uniform accounting and reporting standards, promoted the expansion of technical assistance and professional development opportunities, approved a state definition of literacy, supported funding for adult literacy programs for fiscal year 1991, and identified and resolved broad interagency policies and concerns. The State Literacy Dissemination Center expanded its level of services to local providers by publishing a newsletter, sponsoring workshops, and establishing a computerized data collection system. Local literacy teams were established in each jurisdiction of Maryland and collaboratively developed literacy plans (Maryland State Department of Education, 1990).

5. Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign

The Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign, founded in 1986, was one of the first statewide coalitions to be established in the United States. Its purpose was to facilitate the development of a coordinated statewide effort to provide adult education. A report of the Governor's Task Force on Adult Literacy in Minnesota (1984) recommended that the following actions be taken immediately:

- initiate a Minnesota adult reading campaign and lead a crusade to establish adult literacy as a priority in the state;
- expand the capacity of existing literacy programs to train and use the volunteers resulting from the National Literacy Awareness Campaign;
- institute a state 800 information and referral number to respond to the National Literacy Awareness Campaign by February 1, 1985;
- compile and analyze existing data available through the Department of Education and the State Planning Agency by April 1, 1985;
- increase the adult education allocation in the governor's budgets for 1986 and 1987;
- make literacy a priority in the allocation of existing Job Training Partnership Act and state college work study funds; and
- raise from the private sector and/or allocate $175,000 by February 1, 1985 for immediate action

and raise an additional $410,000 from the private sector by July 1, 1985.

The Task Force also recommended that the following actions be taken over a period of time:

- link economic development and literacy in activities that result in direct impact on both,
- solicit active participation of all state departments and agencies in reaching solutions to the literacy problem,
- support local campaigns to significantly expand literacy services through the resources of the whole community,
- develop a long term strategy to provide 200,000 people a year with adult literacy services by 1990, and
- mandate appropriate representatives to develop strategies and recommendations to prevent adult illiteracy.

The Task Force also proposed that the governor lead the literacy movement in the state. The Minnesota Adult Reading Campaign Committee, appointed by the governor for 18 months, would report directly to the governor and have an advisory committee that included an executive director, the director of the State Planning Agency, an expert about government and legislative affairs, and representatives from the community, business, labor, and a literacy coalition.

The Reading Campaign Committee was to create a literacy coalition composed of literacy service providers, including representatives from adult basic and continuing education agencies, the Minnesota Literacy Council, Inc., libraries, vocational education providers, community colleges, adult learners, and others. It would also establish a statewide, nonprofit agency to provide staff for the coalition and to carry out some of the recommendations of the advisory committee. Under a statement of goals and organizational missions dated November 6, 1985, the Reading Campaign Committee was designated to provide leadership and services to both the public and private sectors.

The Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign was a 5-year initiative. It organized a hotline, initiated student recruitment, created general awareness, implemented workplace literacy, developed staffs and forums, advocated legislation, and published a

newsletter. In its final report to the Literacy Campaign's Board of Directors, the Task Force recommended that its activities be conducted by other literacy organizations in the state (Minnesota Adult Literacy Coalition Task Force, 1990).

6. Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy

The Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Pennsylvania State University established the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy in 1987. The governor of Pennsylvania supported this effort, and state government, as well as the private sector, is represented on the Coalition's Governing Board.

Before the Pennsylvania State Coalition came into being, a planning group identified the three most pressing needs in the field of adult literacy: (a) support for fledgling adult literacy programs, (b) assistance in forming local coalitions among public and private groups, and (c) strengthening already existing local coalitions. To create greater public awareness of the need for literacy training, increase resources for direct service providers, and strengthen statewide literacy efforts, the planning group identified the following objectives for the first year:

- establish the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy,
- conduct a statewide needs assessment,
- strengthen existing coalitions and establish six new ones,
- form an advocacy committee to help with financial support,
- establish a computerized resource bank of persons available to provide training,
- convene regional workshops,
- develop a technical assistance packet,
- form a local coalition support committee,
- establish a communications network through newsletters,
- set up a communications network regarding funding sources,
- inform the public of literacy needs and opportunities, and
- write grant proposals.

The Pennsylvania State University Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy focused on research and development, improved literacy teaching, and acted as an advocate for adult literacy. The State Coalition focused on the latter two needs. The leadership of Pennsylvania State University promoted the Coalition's longevity since it has a protected status and is self-supporting. It also provides a faculty with expertise in the field of adult literacy.

The Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy has established committees for significant areas, including advocacy, local coalition support, and planning for self-sufficiency and membership. It has developed local coalitions throughout the state, providing grants coupled with training and technical assistance. It has also developed a computerized resource bank and increased public awareness of literacy needs.

The Coalition became interested in workplace literacy, and members of its Board visited businesses to advocate workplace programs. The workplace program, named Workplace Literacy Technical Assistance Program (WorkTAP), helps employers to define needs and explore options, identify qualified adult educators, train adult educators for particular types of instruction, assist in program design, and locate other resources. A manual entitled *Upgrading Basic Skills for the Workplace* and an accompanying video, *Literate Workforce: Meeting the Needs*, resulted from the WorkTAP project.

D. Local Coalitions

A number of coalitions have been formed at the local level as well. This section describes several local coalitions whose experiences are worth noting.

1. Arizona LEARN Labs Consortium

Arizona LEARN Labs Consortium, founded in 1990, is a cooperative effort of the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department and Maricopa County Literacy Volunteers in Phoenix and the Pima County Adult Probation and Pima County Adult Education in Tucson.

These four agencies already had the Principles of the Alphabet Literacy System (PALS), computer labs that served students who were functionally illiterate. What brought them together was the need for a comprehensive computer network that would provide educational services from the adult basic education level through the GED. None of the individual agencies had the financial resources to purchase such a system, but together with the State Department of Education, the agencies evaluated different software systems and pooled their resources to purchase the selected system.

Jostens' INVEST system was selected because of its management system and life and learning skills components. The State Department of Education and the participating agencies agreed to pay for the system over a 5-year period on a lease/purchase agreement. The INVEST system contains approximately 6,000 lessons. The program also has the three components that are necessary for any educational environment: an accurate diagnostic tool, a comprehensive management system, and a performance-based curriculum.

2. Maricopa County Adult Probation Education and Literacy Program

In recognition of the relationship between education and criminal behavior, the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department began an education program to meet the needs of the adult offender. The department did not have the resources to establish a program and thus contacted other agencies for assistance. The agencies that were brought together to form this program are the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Mesa Public Schools, Phoenix Union High School District, Literacy

Volunteers of Maricopa County, and the Arizona State Department of Education. Each of the partners provides specific components of the program.

- The Probation Department provides the director, instructor, facilities, utilities, and support.
- The Mesa Public Schools provide part-time teachers, a full-time instructor, software, curriculum, staff development, and computers.
- The Administrative Office of the Courts provides a full PALS computer lab and the software.
- The Arizona State Department of Education provides funding for the Mesa Public Schools and Phoenix Union High School District and for a part-time GED examiner.
- The Phoenix Union High School District provides part-time instructors in probation field offices.
- Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County provides trained tutors and a full-time VISTA volunteer.

Each of these agencies is an integral part of the program and brings with it certain requirements and paperwork, but each also brings an enthusiastic spirit of cooperation.

3. Baltimore Reads, Inc.

Baltimore Reads, Inc., which was begun in 1988 with the support of Baltimore's mayor, is a private, nonprofit organization that works in partnership with both public and private institutions. As expressed in its booklet, *Reading the Future,* its slogan is "The City that Reads." Among its many goals, the organization seeks to create greater funding for private literacy agencies, develop a flexible and innovative curriculum, launch family literacy programs, and establish a model workplace literacy program. Among its many and varied accomplishments over a 2-year period, Baltimore Reads

- developed a citywide management information system that tracks learners by demographic data, service providers, services received, and test scores;
- received a grant to integrate computer-aided instruction and critical thinking skills with basic literacy skills;

- received a grant to establish a network of four new community-based sites;
- established the Literacy Providers' Council to provide a forum and coordinated effort for the private literacy providers in Baltimore;
- developed an assessment tool for screening nonreaders from readers at the fourth-grade level;
- initiated a foundation to assess workplace literacy needs; and
- coordinated several literacy awareness events.

4. Harrisburg and Other Local Coalitions in Pennsylvania

There are 23 local coalitions in Pennsylvania, all of which received grants from the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Literacy. The local coalitions include representatives of state and local governmental agencies, business, labor, service organizations, educational institutions, libraries, and literacy providers. The State Coalition provided technical assistance that enabled the local coalitions to write television advertisements about literacy, produce radio public service announcements, design posters, develop mailing lists, locate spokespersons, publish brochures, sponsor public awareness events, and plan surveys.

The Literacy Coalition of Harrisburg was organized in 1984 when seven literacy providers came together to pool resources, eliminate duplication of services, and establish a system of referrals. Among its accomplishments, the Coalition has (a) conducted a needs survey; (b) shared information and resources; (c) established a hotline; (d) involved the mayor's office to a great extent; (e) received television and press coverage; (f) conducted workshops; and (g) shared library resources, facilities, and staff.

The Literacy Coalition of Harrisburg has also published a guide for building literacy coalitions in small communities, which is available through the ERIC system. It provides a step-by-step approach and gives assistance in writing grant proposals (U.S. Department of Education, 1988).

5. Literacy Network of Kalamazoo County

The Literacy Network of Kalamazoo County, Michigan, was begun in 1986 to coordinate the activities of the Kalamazoo Literacy Council, adult basic education, public libraries, human services organizations, educational institutions, and businesses. Its objectives are similar to successful coalitions elsewhere: (a) make

literacy services available; (b) increase public awareness of illiteracy; (c) recruit students and tutors; (d) stimulate, promote, and fund literacy efforts; and (e) promote communication among service providers.

Since its inception, the Literacy Network has expanded its services to include children as well as adults and has developed programs that include family and intergenerational literacy. The Network has secured extensive funding from community organizations, which, among other projects, will help support diagnostic testing and tutoring for individuals with learning disabilities at two local college reading clinics in the community. The Network also draws upon the talents of the Mad Hatter Theater Troupe to produce dramas that depict illiteracy, its effects on individuals' lives, and its employment ramifications.

The Network has published two pamphlets that describe its work, *One Out of Five American Adults Can't Read This Word* and *One Out of Eight of Your Employees Can't Read Well!* It also financed the development of television and radio advertisements, an informational video, and materials entitled *Teach Your Child to Read and Learn*, which were distributed to schools for parent-teacher conferences (Literacy Network of Kalamazoo County, 1992).

E. TIPS ON BUILDING A COALITION

Coalitions may result from the edict of an authority figure, such as the President or a governor. They may grow out of the recognition of community members of the power of a broader group in solving a problem, or they may result from the support of national, regional, or state initiatives. As with building a house, planning, location, foundation, and materials must all be considered for a coalition to be sound and enduring. The foundation of an enduring coalition is built on the perception of the members that shared activities are more likely to achieve identified goals and objectives than the activities of any one of the separate members. The materials needed in the building process are vision, hope, commitment, trust, perseverance, goodwill, and flexibility.

The planning process, demanding though it may be, is absolutely necessary to the overall success of a coalition. It offers the participants time to get to know each other, to become aware of similarities and differences, to start developing goals and objectives, to chart their financial needs, and to identify their fund-raising capabilities. Planning meetings may be located in the back room of a local cafeteria or in the grand historic chambers of a state building. As groups begin to coalesce, members often volunteer space available through their organizations. Such sharing contributes to the overall economy of the group and helps the members to become acquainted with other groups' functions and facilities.

For over 10 years, the National Coalition for Literacy has distributed a free brochure (National Coalition for Literacy, 1984) with the following tips for groups considering coalition building:

- *Select a chair—someone who is acceptable to all members.* This person may not always be the most obvious or the strongest coalition member. You may find that rotating the position is a desirable way to share influence.
- *Maintain continuity through the services of a coordinator—one person to remain constant throughout other changes.* It is best if this person is a sensitive and skilled negotiator.

- *Avoid competition among the members*. Often constituent members will be raising funds from the same sources. It is important, therefore, to maintain a low profile for the Coalition and emphasize the positive achievements of its members.
- *Build in flexibility*. Members need to opt in and out of decision making as it affects their organizations.
- *Facilitate the establishment of ad hoc groups within the coalition*. If subgroups are flexible and accommodating to member interests, they are more likely to get things done than if they remain rigid and unyielding to the turn of events.
- *Allow for plenty of discussion*. Members must feel that they may contribute to open discussions regularly.
- *Allow for lobbying within the group if this is a group goal*. Such interchange can be beneficial to all concerned if kept within reason.
- *Develop understanding of the real decision-making structure within the group*. Arrange for small group discussions to include those who may feel left out.
- *Search out the strengths of all group members*. Allow such strengths to operate in large and small group discussions. Fit members who work well together into small groups. Build sharing times when large and small groups can intermingle.

The brochure, with others of its type, has contributed to the formation of local, state, and regional initiatives. For all of the coalition building suggestions, the overriding consideration should be including all parties in working together to satisfy all interests. This section elaborates on the tips for coalition building that evolved from the experience of the National Coalition for Literacy.

1. Select a Chair

Initially, the National Coalition for Literacy selected its chair by committee to be an outside person thought to be impartial and of national stature and experience. As the Coalition evolved, it seemed desirable to draw the chair from within the group, rotating

periodically among the major literacy organizations. Now the chair is elected on an annual basis from within the membership.

The chair of the Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition is appointed from within the coalition membership by an administrative triumvirate: the Director of Adult Literacy for the Indiana State Department of Education, the Director of the Indiana State Library, and the Director of the Governor's Voluntary Action Program. This trio of administrative strength not only provides useful insights and perspectives on the possibilities of its members' respective agencies, but its members also make part-time personnel, supplies, equipment, and modest operating resources available. The chair meets with the administrators on a regular basis, works with them in building agendas, and conducts meetings of the whole.

In the National Coalition, the chair makes decisions with the advice and consent of the whole group and, in recent years, with input from the Executive Committee. By contrast, the Indiana Administrative Committee leads, and committees carry the burden of the field work. Each coalition needs to decide who the chair will be and how much power the position will carry.

2. Maintain Continuity

The field of adult literacy being what it is, continuity is a vital ingredient if the participants hope to accomplish their goals. Some central person or agency should be designated as responsible for this task. In many of the large professional organizations, for example, an executive director is employed to fulfill this function over time. For most coalitions, however, given that funding always seems to be a challenge, it may be that a library or other community agency will be willing to undertake core functions such as managing finances and records.

In the National Coalition for Literacy, responsibility for continuity was assumed and has been admirably fulfilled by the American Library Association. The current secretary of the Coalition sometimes takes a Herculean six hours of minutes on a laptop computer, transcribes them, mails them to the Executive Committee for verification, and then duplicates them for the members at the quarterly meetings. The Association also accepts all monies for the Coalition and dispenses the checks. Reporting is overseen by the Finance Committee selected from among Coalition members. This is vital, given that the National Coalition is not incorporated.

Ultimately, continuity is assured by the commitment of the members to remain united in achieving their goals. Practically, continuity is supported by such devices as staggered terms, rotation in office with experienced officers remaining ex officio to assist with administration, and careful records open and available to new workers. Diplomatically, the best thing that can happen to a coalition is that its central figure be a skilled and sensitive negotiator.

3. Avoid Competition

If the members of a coalition are drawn to represent widely diverse constituencies within the community, competition will not be as much of an issue as it is likely to be if members compete for the same financial or personnel resources.

The National Coalition for Literacy hit some bumpy spots early on as the two major volunteer literacy providers vied for money and power. As it became apparent that their interests would ultimately be better served through cooperation than competition, some interesting developments began to occur. Now their directors sit elbow to elbow in the Coalition meetings, often sharing insights to each other's benefit.

Competition has not been much of a factor in the Indiana Coalition, except at the very highest political level. When a governor from the opposite political party was elected, the membership of the governing body changed considerably. If the leadership of a coalition is likely to be dislodged by an election, the membership of the coalition needs to consider how to ensure continuity so that political changes do not destroy the fabric of the organization.

4. Build Flexibility

One of the strengths of the National Coalition for Literacy has been its flexibility. Without a constitution or bylaws for several years, its members had the freedom to explore the possibilities and responsibilities of each. Organizations had an equal voice, although some new members were often initially hesitant to voice opinions, given the greater length of service and sometimes greater literacy involvement of some of the member organizations. It has been important to maintain the open forum of the meetings and to recognize the significance of compromise. Giving a bit in one circumstance often yields big dividends in the next.

One of the temptations in state and local coalitions is for one group, perhaps more firmly entrenched as *the* literacy voice of the

area, to assume power or leadership that has not been bestowed by the group as a whole. An unyielding attitude can hamper the suggestions of a new voice. Flexibility in accommodating fresh ideas can move the group forward, whereas heavy-handed control will soon stifle the creative spirits of others within the group who may find other outlets for their ideas.

5. Use Ad Hoc Groups

Some of the most productive work within the National Coalition has been accomplished by ad hoc groups established for a particular purpose. Whether as volunteers or by appointment of the chair, ad hoc groups have dived into a task, worked unstintingly for several weeks or months, accomplished the task, and then dissolved. Ad hoc assignments are sometimes a better fit for members who do not take kindly to long-standing committee assignments. If the subgroups are flexible and accommodating to member interests, they are more likely to get things done than if they are rigid and unyielding.

6. Allow for Discussion

It is sometimes difficult, if not boring, to listen to a member obliquely approach a point of discussion three or four times before clearly focusing on it. However, allowing for discussion is one of the best insurance policies against misunderstanding. It allows the airing of views that may not have been previously considered. For many, sitting through the early meetings of the National Coalition was an education in patience and acronyms. As the discussions ranged more widely, they also became more inclusive and, consequently, more educational in the very best sense of the word.

Since the National Coalition generally limits its quarterly meetings to one day, it has become necessary to reduce the number of sharing periods. Members often have to leave to accommodate other meetings while they are in Washington, to catch planes, or to return to their responsibilities. Members often distribute items in the morning and sandwich their comments as appropriate throughout the tightly packed agenda. Building an agenda that keeps comments on track without unnecessarily curtailing needed discussion is a particularly important role for the chair.

In its 10-year history, the National Coalition has found it productive to hold three retreats. These 2- or 3-day gatherings provide a time to take stock of accomplishments and chart new directions. The first such retreat was a miserable, but perhaps

necessary, experience for most of the Coalition members. It was chaired by a professional facilitator, but many of the participants felt that the investment in the facilitator's fee might have been better spent. However unsettling that experience was, it did provide the members with firmer resolve to make the Coalition a success. Later retreats gave additional, needed focus and resulted in the long-term goals.

The Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition has held annual day-long retreats at various state parks. These informal gatherings provide time for members to get to know each other in a way that is often not possible at the regular meetings.

7. Allow for Lobbying

Lobbying means working to influence others toward a desired end. It can provide a means for coalition members to get to know each others' long-range goals and short-range objectives. It can provide an opportunity for those with dissimilar goals and objectives to understand more fully the positions of their colleagues. In any case, lobbying is a healthy action and should not be discouraged. It can be beneficial if kept within reason.

8. Establish a Decision-Making Structure

One of the keys to democratic decision making is the input of all group members. A process for decision making is also needed. If coalition members are committed to hearing all of the voices within the group, this spirit will be communicated to those who may feel insignificant or left out. Ideas are not limited to the largest or most influential groups. Bylaws and/or a constitution will facilitate at least the format for decision making.

CONCLUSIONS

Coalition building in adult literacy over the past decade ultimately achieved far more than the visions originally held by coalition builders. With a united purpose, coalitions have attempted to recognize and help to meet the growing demands of those members of society who struggle to master minimal literacy skills. One of the hallmarks of these new associations is that they have managed to stay fluid enough to assume new configurations as needs have changed or been more accurately perceived. The Urban Literacy Initiative metamorphosed into the Literacy Network. The State Literacy Initiative was gradually transformed by the State Literacy Exchange of the National Governors' Association. It is too soon to tell how long these efforts will be seen as necessary. Ironically, the only constant appears to be change itself.

A look at the past decade of coalition building shows that although much has gone right, certain things have failed to meet expectations. There has been a convergence of values and interests that has solidified a national movement. The general public is now aware of adult literacy as a need at many levels. The synergism represented in this movement can stand as a model for future groups. A body of literacy-related individuals and organizations has undertaken collective actions that individual member groups could not have attempted alone. They have affirmed and fortified each other and achieved both state and national objectives.

Through a convergence of efforts, the field can now look to the National Institute for Literacy as the central agency responsible for implementing many of the goals sought by the national and state coalitions. This centralization, promoted by many of the National Coalition for Literacy groups individually as well as by the Coalition itself, was greatly needed and, through the state or regional clearinghouses and resource centers, has the potential to move the country closer to the achievement of literacy services and resources available to all.

Spurred by the spread of electronic communication in the 1980s, the world became smaller even as knowledge needs and potential for producing knowledge exploded. Although coalitions did not adopt electronic networking to any great degree, the awareness campaign in the mid-1980s moved the field to recognize the potential of the media in building awareness. Public service announcements burgeoned at both the state and national level.

With the introduction of electronic networks, the capacity to share information should greatly increase, and, thus, significantly contribute to the planning and maintenance of successful coalitions.

On the minus side has always been the limitation of funds. Originally, the National Coalition had hoped to provide technical assistance. That hope had to be scrapped early on as member groups realized that there were no funds, not even for transportation to the meetings. Funding has also limited the directions served; for example, the needs of Native Americans have never been part of the national discussion. With little funding, the National Coalition, although diligent in its effort to engage constituent members, has been unable to become a national voice for literacy.

In addition, while the public is now more aware than it was 10 years ago of the socioeconomic components of illiteracy—unemployment, homelessness, teenage pregnancy, and inadequate medical care—it is questionable that this awareness has done much to alleviate the problems.

As J. Hage suggested in a lecture given at the Indiana University Institute for Advanced Study (September 9, 1992), although the period of building awareness has perhaps peaked, we are entering a new period, one in which even more creative thinking will be needed to cope with the high degree of complexity that will characterize the workplace and the total fabric of life experience in the 21st century. To avoid a permanent underclass, a larger vision of interdependence is necessary to help redistribute these complex burdens—burdens that will surely increase over time if they are not addressed.

An inclusive approach to action that emphasizes cooperation and collaboration supported by the communications potential of the coming century must be adopted. With the continuing advancement of electronic technology, the possibility of analyzing and sharing data with a larger number of communities, cities, and states becomes apparent. Many more collaborative ventures must be supported before the field will be ready for the competition usually associated with business and industry. The fragile and poorly funded literacy efforts must be supported to meet the mounting needs of societies for education and resources.

Thus, the present task becomes to see that the nation's collective vision moves beyond the year 2001 to the time when the students now in our schools and colleges will, in their middle

years, be ready to discover answers to the problems that will face them at the time. Certainly these answers will not come through the divisive nationalism that characterizes much of today's thinking. Rather, solutions will come through a larger cooperative sense of community.

Coalitions can help to confront the hopelessness that small groups often feel in the face of daunting tasks. "Do it together" can become their motto. The destruction of barriers can help groups with few resources to realize the vision of collaboration. In many instances, the action programs of small groups can only be paid for through larger, more inclusive, group actions. Only then can we come to recognize our vital partners and together achieve a legitimate exercise of power that sees win-win as the final goal for all.

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APPENDIX A

Sample Membership: Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition

Persons from the following types of organizations will be invited:

- Governor's Voluntary Action Program
- Department of Public Instruction, Division of Adult and Community Education
- ACTION
- B. Dalton Booksellers*
- Chambers of Commerce, Business, and Industry (3)
- Indiana Association of Adult and Continuing Education*
- Indiana Community Education Association
- Indiana Council of Churches
- Indiana General Assembly (2)
- Indiana International Reading Association*
- Indiana Library Association*
- Institutions—Corrections and Mental Health
- Labor
- Laubach Literacy International*
- Lilly Endowment, Inc.
- Literacy Volunteers of Indiana*
- National Assault on Illiteracy
- United Way of Indiana
- Others to be added

*National counterparts are co-sponsors of the National Coalition for Literacy.

From: The Indiana Adult Literacy Initiative, 1983.

APPENDIX B

List of Coalition Addresses

Indiana Adult Literacy Coalition
The Governor's Voluntary Action Program
State House Room 114
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798
(317) 232-2503

National Center on Adult Literacy
University of Pennsylvania
3910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
(215) 898-2100

National Coalition for Literacy
c/o American Bar Association
1800 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-2287

National Governors' Association
State Literacy Exchange
Hall of the States
444 North Capitol Street
Washington, DC 20001-1572
(202) 624-5300

National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20002-7560
(202) 732-1973

Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy
502 Ellen Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011
(717) 730-9161

PLUS Project Literacy U.S.
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 622-1492

Secretary of State's Literacy Office
431 S. Fourth Street
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 785-6921

State Advisory Committee for
Adult & Community Services (STAC)
Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595
(410) 333-2361